

CHICAGO—Today, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) issued the following statement about this weekend's confrontation off the coast of Israel.

"In the media storm surrounding the recent Gaza flotilla incident we must not forget the larger picture. The loss of life that occurred on the flotilla was indeed tragic, but much of the responsibility lies with those who chose to run an internationally recognized blockade and attack uniformed personnel.

The flotilla turned down an Israeli offer to deliver the humanitarian goods through the port of Ashdod and ignored repeated warnings that it would not be allowed to reach Gaza. Clearly, the flotilla's primary objective was not simply to deliver humanitarian aid.

Rather than offering peaceful resistance, the flotilla organizers beat, stabbed, and even shot Israeli soldiers as they landed on the main ship. The reckless actions of the flotilla's organizers do not promote peace or enhance the well being of the people of Gaza.

We must remember who rules Gaza – Hamas – a terrorist organization which has pledged to destroy Israel. The situation of Gaza's residents would be far better served by these organizers calling on Hamas to meet the three minimal demands of the international community for normalization-recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence and terror, and acceptance of

previous agreements. This would lead to a real improvement in the lives of ordinary Gazans.

Israel must be able to defend itself and keep weapons out of the hands of Hamas.

And the U.S. must stand with our friend Israel.”

Quigley has been a [stalwart supporter of Israel](#) in his first term in Congress, voting to [condemn the Goldstone report](#) and calling on the United Nations Security Council to [keep Iran nuclear-free](#).